

Opportunity to Comment on the Barber Ridge Project

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forests, Mt. Magazine Ranger District, has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Barber Ridge Project which includes a programmatic plan amendment to the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests Plan. The project is in Township 6 North, Range 24 and 25 West, and Township 5 North, Range 24 West of Logan County and Yell County, AR and encompasses 7,149 acres of Forest Service land and 3,052 acres of private land. The only private land to be treated would be with willing landowners that have signed an agreement with the Forest Service. This is an integrated resources project encompassing forest health and ecosystem management, wildlife and aquatic habitat management, silvicultural treatments, road and trail management, and recreation improvements. The plan amendment is to correct an error in assigning management areas when the Forest Plan was revised in 2005. Approximately 5.75 acres would be reassigned from 2.B. State Park to 1.G Special Interest Area Management Area in order to accommodate the OHV trail that was in existence at time of plan revision.

The environmental assessment (EA) is available on-line at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=53159>. The EA, supporting documentation, and additional information can also be obtained by contacting Amanda Bataineh at amanda.bataineh@usda.gov.

The analysis within the Barber Ridge EA and the associated programmatic plan amendment will result in two decisions, which consequently requires two separate but concurrent public comment periods. Since this project addresses both a plan amendment and project site-specific activities, it will be subject to two different objection processes:

- For the project-level site-specific activities proposed in this project, the objection procedures identified in 36 CFR 218.8 will apply.
- For the plan amendment component of this project to change Forest Plan management area allocations, the objection procedures identified in 36 CFR 219, Subpart B (plan-level objections) will apply.

How to Comment and Timeframe on the EA

The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and not authorized under the HFRA and is subject to 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. Specific written comments (§218.2) on the proposed project will be accepted for 30 days following this legal notice being published in the newspaper of record for the Forest: *The Courier*, Russellville AR. The publication date of this legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action documented in an EA. Those wishing to comment should not rely on dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) who submit timely and specific written comments (as defined by 36 CFR 218.2) about this proposed project or activity during this or another public comment period established by the Responsible Official will be eligible to file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by 36 CFR 218.25 (a)(3) and include name, postal address, title of the project and signature or other verification of

identity upon request and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 218.25(a)(4). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Comments should be within the scope of the Proposed Action, have a direct relationship to the Proposed Action, and must include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider (36 CFR 218.2).

How to Comment and Timeframe on the Programmatic Plan Amendment

The proposed project is an activity that includes a programmatic plan amendment and is subject to 36 CFR 219 Subparts A and B. Substantive formal comments (§219.62) on the programmatic plan amendment will be accepted for 30 days following this legal notice being published in the newspaper of record for the Forest: *The Courier*, Russellville AR. The publication date of this legal notice in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period for a proposed action documented in an EA. Those wishing to comment should not rely on dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. If the comment period ends on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, comments will be accepted until the end of the next Federal working day.

Only individuals or entities (as defined by 36 CFR 219.53) who submit substantive formal comments (as defined by 36 CFR 219.62) about this plan amendment will be eligible to file an objection. Other requirements to be eligible to submit an objection are defined by 36 CFR 219.54(c) and include name, postal address, name of the plan amendment, signature or other verification of identity upon request, and the identity of the individual or entity who authored the comments. Individual members of an entity must submit their own individual comments in order to have eligibility to object as an individual. A timely submission will be determined as outlined in 36 CFR 219.16(a)(2). It is the responsibility of the sender to ensure timely receipt of any comments submitted. Names and contact information submitted with comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Substantive formal comments are those that are within the scope of the proposal, are specific to the proposal, have a direct relationship to the proposal, and include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider (36 CFR 219.62).

Submitting Comments

Specific written comments on the EA and substantive formal comments on the programmatic plan amendment must be submitted via mail, fax, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Amanda Bataineh c/o Lori D. Wood, Forest Supervisor, 605 W Main Street, Russellville, AR 72801, FAX: (479) 964-7518. Electronic comments including attachments may be submitted by email in word (.doc), portable document format (.pdf), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), and hypertext markup language (.html) to comments-southern-ozark-stfrancis@usda.gov. Please state "Barber Ridge Project" in the subject line when providing electronic responses, or on the envelope when replying by mail.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer.